



# THE CITY OF WHITTIER

*Gateway to Western Prince William Sound*

P.O. Box 608 • Whittier, Alaska 99693 • (907) 472-2327 • Fax (907) 472-2404

**WHITTIER CITY COUNCIL  
REGULAR MEETING  
TUESDAY MAY 18, 2021  
7:00 PM  
COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING**

## **MINUTES**

### **1. CALL TO ORDER**

City Clerk, Naelene Matsumiya called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

### **2. OPENING CEREMONY**

Naelene Matsumiya led the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **3. ROLL CALL**

#### **A. Council members present and establishing a quorum:**

Victor Shen, Dan Blair, Monty Irvin, Peter Denmark, Tom Wagner (Joined at 7:52pm) and Dave Dickason.

**MOTION:** Monty Irvin made a motion to excuse David Pinquoch and Tom Wagner from tonight's meeting

**SECOND:** Dan Blair

**DISCUSSION:** None

**VOTE:** Motion passed unanimously

#### **B. Administration Present:**

Jim Hunt, City Manager

Naelene Matsumiya, City Clerk

Kris Erchinger, Finance Director

Scott Korbe, Public Works Director

Dave Borg, Harbormaster

Andre Achee, Police Chief

**Others Present:** Tim Wieland, Christina Wieland, Lindsey Erk, Roselle Medez, and Cathy McCord



#### **4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

April 20, 2021

**MOTION:** Peter Denmark made a motion to approve the minutes with amendments to add discussion of the personnel policy and procedures.

**SECOND:** Dan Blair

**DISCUSSION:** Peter Denmark requested the minutes be approved with the discussion of the policy and procedures included.

**VOTE:** Motion passed 4-1

#### **5. APPROVAL OF THE REGULAR MEETING AGENDA**

**MOTION:** Dan Blair made a motion to approve the May 18, 2021 Regular Meeting Agenda as is

**SECOND:** Monty Irvin

**DISCUSSION:** None

**VOTE:** Motion passed unanimously.

#### **6. MAYOR'S REPORT**

##### **A. Mayor Report**

Nothing new to report.

##### **B. Vice Mayor Report**

Nothing new to report.

#### **7. MANAGER'S REPORT**

##### **A. City Manager and Director Reports- Jim Hunt**

Jim reported that it has come to his attention that there's been issues that the City has been dealing with encroachment issues regarding lease, parking issues, fire and safety issues, and right of way issues. He stated that he hopes Council endorses ordinances when it comes to these issues. He also reported that Administration has been working on the Buckner Building and mitigation issues that need to be addressed. He stated that major progress has been made and will be brought forward to the City Council. Encouraged everyone to come forward with concerns about this. He reported that he has been working with Eastern Aleutian Tribes Clinic for a grant for Covid sanitation of the Public Safety Building and ambulances. He reported that the City is undergoing its audit.

Monty Irvin stated that there are a lot of issues to deal with in a short amount of time.

Jim responded by saying he has been working with the lobbyist and having ongoing conversations. He addressed the restrooms in the Harbor. Stated that restrooms are open, and restoration is in store.

Peter Denmark responded to Jim's comment about parking. He stated he will make comments as a member of the audience and as a business owner and not at the dais as a Council Member.

Kris Erchinger highlighted on the renewal of the City's insurance. She commended staff for their work in their participation in Safety Training. She thanked Dave Borg and Dyanna Pratt for their leadership roles in the process and because of them, the City has met its requirements and will be getting a reduction of its premium and has received discounts in each line of insurance. She reported that the audit is ongoing. She mentioned leases and leases that were eligible for lease credit based on agreements between the lessor and the lessee. She brought up the Inn at Whittier



and Passage Canal Development as they were the entities with lease credits. She updated by saying the Inn at Whittier has exhausted their lease credit and Passage Canal Development is expected to exhaust theirs in 2022. She gave an update on the State funding to the City has totaled to \$2.2 million and gave thanks to the State for helping the community during the pandemic. She added that in Federal funding, the City has received more than a million dollars.

Dan Blair responded to Jim's comment about the restroom and stated his support in restoration. He said it was the right move.

Dave Borg gave his report and stated that he and his staff had been chasing leaks in various areas of the harbor since water has been turned on. He continues to work on the harbor restrooms. He reported on the issues with the Travel Lift and how the aspects of the tires have malfunctioned during replacement and has slowed down repair. He commented that replacing the parts would cost \$8,900 not including shipping. He did the math and stated that it was \$4,000 for the tires and another \$8,900 to fix them. He said he will bring the discussion to the Port and Harbor Commission on whether to continue usage or not. Dave also mentioned he will need to spend more money on fixing hydraulics on the lift to get it leak free and operational. He reported that the harbor skiff is also experiencing issues as it started taking on water due to corrosion in the keel of the boat. He is looking for options, but the skiff will need to be replaced. He gave good news in revenue and said he was very impressed by the staff and what they have collected.

Jim thanked Dave for his due diligence with his crew. Jim continued to say that these issues we are facing now are issues from the past that were deferred and ignored and does not reflect Dave as a Harbormaster or his team. He commended staff in every department and Kelly Bender for her work in the Chamber of Commerce and added that despite the lack of cruise ships this summer, he thinks Whittier will have a great summer.

Dave Borg added one last comment about the boardwalk and putting money towards items that need repair. He spoke about the degraded infrastructure in the harbor and that eventually he's going to have to make a decision to start restoration to it.

Monty Irvin made a comment and thanked the Harbormaster and his staff and said he thinks both the Harbormaster and his staff are doing a wonderful job. "Keep it up!" He added.

Andre Achee updated on staff and said Ruben Garcia had been hired. Gave a brief background history on Ruben for the Council. He reported that the Whittier Public Safety is maintaining their contract with the tunnel and there has been a slight increase with the advantage to the City. Public Safety has assisted with parking enforcement. He continued reporting on signage and enforcement. He is planning to speak with business owners in the triangle area and parking enforcements there on busy days because if there was an emergency, the fire apparatus will not be able to make it through there. He hopes to have conversations that will result in a plan for ease of access for emergency vehicles. He continues working with the Harbormaster as well as the Public Works director for the harbor area. He reported on the Bike Rodeo event that was held with the school to teach about bike safety in Whittier. He thanked all those who were involved.

Monty Irvin made a comment about basic communication and Whittier Police Department's collaboration with Anchorage Police Department. He gave a summary about an incident that happened to him on Portage road. He asked why APD was patrolling an area in which Whittier Police should have been patrolling instead. Andre explained.

Scott Korbe gave his report on snow removal, water meters, and parking. He continued his report



with progress on the earthquake emergency repair funding, Shotgun Cove Road, and the Whittier wells project. He said the City is within budget for the wells project and that it should be shovel-ready by November or December of this year. He reported that the environmental assessment for Shotgun Cove Road has been completed and closed. Responses have been sent to Western Federal Lands. Army Corps. Permit for the Shotgun Cove Road project is in finalization phase. Shovel ready by January 2022. Working with Whittier Seafood for speed bumps and striping in the facility area. Currently looking for people to stripe. Finalized a claim on damage for snow removal equipment for repair. Scott mentioned grants for Shotgun Cove Road for \$6 million ask and a \$2.5 million FLAP grant. He stated that the City applied for a \$150,000 ADC Planning project and a \$2.8 million grant for Capitol Improvement project for the wells. He mentioned that despite getting people to work, work is still getting done.

Monty Irvin asked about the Head of the Bay project. Scott replied that there are environmental concerns and that studies are still being done it is beyond the City's control at this point.

Jim responded and said his concerns will be sent to the attorney. In the meantime, there are still entities interested in developing on the northernmost portion of the land. "We are tightening it up."

**B. Attorney's Comments**

**8. COMMISSION/COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**A. Planning Commission**

Nothing new to report

**B. Port & Harbor Commission**

Nothing new to report

**C. Parks & Recreation Committee**

Victor Shen reported on the beach clean-up at the head of the bay in collaboration with the Prince William Sound Stewardship foundation and another potential follow up beach clean-up. He mentioned that the Parks and Recreation committee is looking to install flower pots around the City and creating a "adopt-a-planter" program.

**D. Whittier Community School**

Tim Wieland reported on the graduation of Jenessa and Jeffery. He shared his enthusiasm about the weather for that day. He reported that on the previous day, the school held a graduation for the pre-school children who were not able to have a celebration last year. He reiterated on the Bike Rodeo event and thanked WPD and Victor Shen. Hunter Safety Kayak survival skills are still being offered to the children as well as other programs. He stated Archery has been closed. He reported that on May 25, there will be city clean up and the last day of school on May 26. Tim presented two plaques to Whittier Seafood and the Eastern Aleutian Tribes clinic to express appreciation for their efforts to help the school during the pandemic.

**E. Prince William Sound Aquaculture Corp.**

Nothing new to report

**F. Regional Citizen's Advisory Council**

Nothing new to report

**9. CITIZENS COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS NOT SCHEDULED FOR PUBLIC HEARING**

None



## **10. APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA**

None

## **11. PUBLIC HEARINGS (NON-ORDINANCE)**

None

## **12. PRESENTATIONS**

None

## **13. ORDINANCES**

A. (Emergency Ordinance Public Hearing) Emergency Ordinance 2021-01- An Emergency ordinance of the City Council of the City of Whittier, Alaska, Retroactive Extending the City Manager's Proclamation of a Local Emergency In Order to Protect and Preserve the Health, Safety, and Welfare of the Whittier Community During a State and Local Public Health Emergency Resulting from Covid-19

**MOTION:** Dan Blair made a motion to open a Public Hearing for Emergency ordinance 2021-01 at 8:01 pm.

**SECOND:** Victor Shen

**DISCUSSION:** None

**VOTE:** Motion passed unanimously

No public testimony

**MOTION:** Dan Blair made a motion to close public testimony part of the public hearing and open it up for Council discussion.

**SECOND:** Victor Shen

**DISCUSSION:** None

**VOTE:** Motion passed unanimously

Council discussion:

Peter Denmark asked what the Covid policies are in terms of access to City Facilities. Jim responded that the City is mask-free and people have been visiting the Public Safety building. He reminded that if you do not feel comfortable you can still use your mask, doors are open and City staff still wear masks to their own discretion when seeing community members in their offices. Peter asked that administration come up with signage around the City that states "Please wear your mask." Jim asked for Council consensus and he will work with staff.

**MOTION:** Dan Blair made a motion to close the Public Hearing and adopt Emergency Ordinance #2021-01 and resume the Regular Meeting

**SECOND:** Victor Shen

**DISCUSSION:** None

**VOTE:** Motion passed unanimously

B. Ordinance #02-2021 – An Ordinance of The City Council of Whittier, Alaska Amending WMC Chapter 2.54 To Remove All Decision-Making Duties of The Port and Harbor Commission, Codify Process for Providing Recommendations to Council, and Remove Inconsistencies and Redundancy in the Reasons for and Processes Surrounding the Declaration of a Vacancy on the Commission.

Dan Blair asked about his sponsorship to the Ordinance. He stated his intention was to modify a typo



in the code. He stated that he thinks the Council is getting ahead of himself. Naelene Matsumiya clarified that the ordinance was prepared by the City Attorney after both Dan and Peter requested this item be on the agenda.

Dave Dickason asked if this had anything to do with Personnel?

Jim answered that this is only pertaining to the Ports and Harbor Commission to clarify in the code that they are an advisory board and not a Quasi-Judicial Board that the code states.

Peter Denmark Stated his essential concern was the lack of information stream from them other than their minutes and historically it has been through resolutions from the Ports and Harbor Commission and the Minutes.

Jim responded that anything after the passage of the Ordinance would be advisory only. He thanked Peter.

**MOTION:** Victor Shen made a motion to schedule a Public Hearing for Ordinance #02-2021 for the next regular meeting.

**SECOND:** Monty Irvin

**DISCUSSION:** None

**VOTE:** Motion passed unanimously

C. Ordinance #03-2021 – An Ordinance of The City Council Of Whittier, Alaska Amending WMC 2.10.040 To Permit The Mayor, Rather Than City Council, To Determine If Council Members Have Substantial Financial Interests Unless Council Overrides The Mayor's Determination

Council discussed the ordinance for some time as there was some confusion on the process and what constitutes a financial interest.

**MOTION:** Dan Blair made a motion to schedule a Public Hearing for ordinance #03-2021 at the Next Regular Meeting.

**SECOND:** Victor Shen

**DISCUSSION:** None

**VOTE:** Motion failed, 3-3.

#### **14. RESOLUTIONS**

None

#### **15. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

A. Res. #12-2021, Regarding Ad Hoc Committee

Dan had some comments about using Seward's guidelines as a template.

#### **16. NEW BUSINESS**

#### **17. COUNCIL DISCUSSION**

Dan Blair asked to bring forward a COLA resolution in July for an inflation impact of the cost of living.

Monty stated that several staff had outlived the step raises and how it has changed throughout the years.



## **18. CITIZEN'S DISCUSSION**

Scott Korbe updated on the restrooms at the City Park by the basketball court. He also he mentioned a resolution coming forward at the next meeting regarding Shotgun Cove Road. He also stated that the Permit Coordinator will be here to explain what it is about.

Cathy McCord extended her thanks to the Whittier Community school for their recognition of Whittier Seafood and what they have done for the students. She stated that they do not do it for the recognition, they do it for the children. She stated that Whittier Seafood will continue to help the school/community and thanked everyone.

Peter Denmark made a comment as a member of the public and spoke about parking issues. He gave a summary of an incident that happened between a harbor staff and an employee of Alaska Sea Kayakers. He stated that the appropriate avenue would have been to address the concerns with the business owner and not an hourly worker. He continued stating that he was told to do things differently regardless of what it takes for the business. He gave a history of when kayaks used to be launched in the east ramp and a letter letting them know that the east ramp is no longer feasible as a kayak launch area. The letter recommended the west ramp as a kayak launching area but the west ramp no longer exists. He stated that he had written letter to the City for kayaking infrastructure asking where the kaya launch site was, to no response. He stated that in 2019, the beach by the ferry terminal that was used for kayak launching was covered in fish slime and fuel spills. The same as Smitty's Cove and the other side of the harbor. He stated that after years of multiple request, to no response. He concluded that he is trying to run the one of the largest kayaking operations in South Central Alaska, and there is no where to go.

Dave Dickason gave some input and suggested that maybe an association be formed with Peter's company and other kayaking entities in Whittier.

Peter responded that the City will be hearing from operations that utilize Smitty's cove and the beach by the ferry terminal. Peter went on to say that the ferry terminal beach is railroad property meaning the City has no say in access and is being leased by another company. He mentioned potential closings due to traffic issues or other situations by the ferry operations and could cause some restriction of use. He continued.

Dave Borg responded to Peter's concerns. He apologized for misunderstanding the pressing manner of the situation and said that when this issue was discussed, it was implicated that it was a future project and not a project that needed to be done right now. He acknowledged the email and was under the impression that the subject was to coincide with the Comprehensive Plan as a waterfront plan. He stated that, at the moment, there is no quick fix, but he is looking at options to help. Dave also mentioned the parking and that he will speak to his employee about apologized for not taking it on personally.

Peter responded to Dave and reiterated the conversation that was had with Annie and Dave and agreed that, yes, there are no easy answers as of right now. He commented that they will survive this year and that there is no imminent crisis that will shut them down, but restricted access point and they're close to done. He concluded by thanking Dave for his response.

## **19. COUNCIL AND ADMINISTRATION'S RESPONSE TO CITIZEN'S COMMENTS**


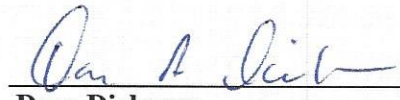
None



## 20. ADJOURNMENT

Council adjourned the meeting at 8:54pm

ATTEST:

  
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**Naelene Matsumiya**  
City Clerk  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**Dave Dickason**  
Mayor